

Session 10: Praying Apostolic Prayers

I. THE NECESSITY OF GROWING IN CORPORATE PRAYER

- A. The Lord said that one of the main expressions of the Church before His return would be prayer (Isa. 56:7; Amos 9:11–15; Acts 15:15–16; Mal. 1:11). We must learn how to do *effective, enjoyable corporate prayer*.
⁷ Even them [Gentiles] I will ... make them joyful in My house of prayer. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. (Isa. 56:7)
- B. The Lord said that the Church holds the keys to the quality of life a city or region experiences. We exercise the authority Jesus gave us by saying God’s Word back to Him with faith-filled words of agreement—this is what intercession is. Representing God’s interests for the earth with both a lifestyle of whole-hearted love (obedience) and declarations of agreement (prayer). When we do this, we move in the authority given us.
¹⁹ And I will give you the keys [authority] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Mt. 16:19)
- C. The Lord told His people that by aligning their lifestyle and gathering together in corporate prayer and fasting, they can release blessing. This great privilege and responsibility we have been given is rarely accessed but when it is—great things happen! (Joel 2:12–17)
¹² “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” ¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God... ¹⁴ Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him— (Joel 2:12–14)
- D. A great outpouring of the Spirit, which the Lord has promised (Joel 2:28–32), will come when the global church gathers together in prayer and fasting in a lifestyle aligned with God in whole-hearted love (Joel 2:12–17)
²⁸ “And it shall come to pass afterward [Joel 2:12–17, corporate prayer and fasting] that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. ²⁹... I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28–29)
- E. The outpouring of the Spirit was only partially fulfilled in Acts 2. What is coming is a *global outpouring* on “*all flesh*”. There are several indications Acts 2 did not fulfill what God revealed through the prophet Joel.
³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord [Jesus’ return]. ³² And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.... (Joel 2:30–32)
1. In the days of the apostles, the Spirit fell on 120 people (Acts 1:4, 12–15), leading to 3,000 immediate salvations (Acts 2:41)—this is not the “all flesh” (v. 28) that Joel 2 spoke of (ethnicity, regions, etc...)
 2. The outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 is accompanied by *cosmic disturbances* (v. 30–31) which *have not yet happened* as described here.

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3. The outpouring results in a great deliverance (v. 32): involving *protection* (Ps. 91:3-10), *provision* (cf. Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4, 6, 26), *power to walk in our full destiny*, and *salvation from walking in deception* (1 Tim. 4:1-2). This collective deliverance of God's people has not yet happened either.
- F. There are three main types of prayer. In this session we are addressing how to engage in *intercession*. You may use this tool in corporate prayer services with or without music. These prayers can also be used privately when praying over certain issues or people.
1. Devotion – We experience personal transformation by enjoying communion with the Godhead in love.
 2. Supplication – Asking God to bring change to our personal life circumstances (internal/external)
 3. Intercession – Asking God to change the life circumstances of others; individuals or people groups.
- G. If we desire to grow in corporate prayer, there are many factors to address. Corporate prayer consists of as little as two-three people or a service of 1,000 believers gathered together in prayer.
1. Involvement. What do you do in a corporate prayer meeting? How do you know what to pray?
 2. Focus. Who determines the focus of the prayers in the room and how do they do this?
 3. Differences. How do you unify believers from various denominations, traditions and cultures?
 4. Detractions. How to minimize distractions, the things that take away from the momentum of prayer in the room?
- H. Praying prayers from the Bible, specifically “apostolic prayers” will address these challenges as well as provide many positive benefits.

II. APOSTOLIC PRAYERS: THE LANGUAGE OF GOD'S HEART GIVEN TO US

- A. The Scripture is also a *prayer manual*, *directing* us how to pray. As we pray the Word with our own mouths, It *reveals God's heart* and by the Spirit, *marks our own*. (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:2; Rom. 10:8, 17). For example, when we see that Jesus' one desire is for us to experience Him and partner with Him, it gives us confidence to pray for it to be established in our hearts and in the church today.

²⁴ “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

- B. We *value* and *use* apostolic prayers because they are *the language of God's heart*. These prayers were burning on the Father's heart—and still are. He gave them to the Spirit to give to the apostles.

⁹ [We, Paul and the apostles with him] do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work... (Col. 1:9-10)

- C. *If the Father gave it to the Church, it will be answered by Him*. Since the prayers are in the Scripture, *they are the very will of God*, ensuring an answer and response from God! (1 Jn. 5:14-15). These prayers are a blank check given to us by God which we can sign our name upon regarding our city, church or family.

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14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14–15)

- D. Apostolic prayers are the prayers of our chief Apostle and High Priest, Jesus (Heb. 3:1; Eph. 2:20) and those given to His apostles by the Spirit. ***There are around twenty-five to thirty apostolic prayers.***
- E. Many of us have never used apostolic prayers to pray—but having just read or studied them in the NT.

III. FEATURES OF APOSTOLIC PRAYERS.

- A. ***Apostolic prayers are God-focused.*** They address the One who possesses unlimited, uncontested power on His throne in heaven (Rev. 4–5), the most kind, gentle and perfect Being—our Father (Psalm 18:35; Isa. 55:7; Luke 15:20–24; James 1:17; Heb. 4:6; 12:9, 22–24; Rev. 15:3). These prayers do not address demons, principalities or powers in the heavens.
- B. ***Apostolic prayers are positive.*** They ask for an impartation of something good, not a removal of something bad. We pray for love to abound not for hatred to leave (Phil. 1:9–11). We pray for holiness, not for the spirit of immorality or pornography to go (1 Thes. 3:9–13). We focus on the positive because the Bible does this and after years of doing it, we will see it's beneficial for those in the prayer service. God still answers negative focused prayers as He's a gracious, kind editor of our prayers!
 - 1. ***Positive prayers build unity.*** Unity is critical for anointing in our priestly ministry of intercession (Psalm 133:1–3). When we pray against negative things, people may differ in opinion or question the person praying and immediately disengage.
 - 2. ***Positive prayers enhance love.*** If a person prays, “God, deal with the sin in this city,” for example, some may get annoyed or judgmental about that person or their prayer. They may think, “Who is this person to pray this way?” Negative prayers sometimes have an angry tone which is easy to dislike. In general, negative prayers do not build up the listener (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4–8, 13; Phil. 4:8; Eph. 4:29).
 - 3. ***Positive prayers grow faith*** (Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2, 5). When we hear people pray the apostolic prayers, *they increase our faith because we see the plans of God for His Church—a victorious, mature and spotless Bride* able to partner with Him and know His heart (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 21:2¹). Do you believe in a victorious Church? Praying the apostolic prayers with faith will ensure you do!

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

- C. ***Apostolic prayers are for the Church.*** Apostolic prayers are almost entirely devoted to the strengthening of the Church, not for the lost. Only Romans 10:1 is concerned about the lost Jewish unbelievers. God deeply cares for the salvation of the lost and the transformation of society.

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1. God has given the Church all authority (Mat. 16:17–19; Mt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:14–18).
*18 ...I [Jesus] will **build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19...**whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Mat. 16:18–19)***
 2. God has promised to put His glory in the Church and put His glory on display (Mat. 5:13–15; Eph. 3:21). It will happen. The Lord said before His return the Church would possess *divine understanding* (Jer. 23:20; Dan. 11:32-33; 12:10), *godly character* (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Mat. 5:48) and *supernatural power* (Dan. 11:32-33; Mt. 16:18-19; Jn. 14:12).
 3. In Paul’s day, the revival in the Church of Ephesus resulted in the entire province of Asia (Modern Turkey) hearing the gospel and pagan society transformed! (Acts 19:10, 20). Because the Church was filled with God’s presence and operating in a greater measure of the Spirit, thousands of anointed preachers and teachers went throughout the cities of Asia preaching and demonstrating the gospel. *Unusual miracles* (19:11), *healings* (19:12), *deliverances* (19:12), *the fear of the Lord* (19:17), *mass conviction and confession* (19:18) and *the public removal of sorcery/witchcraft* (darkness) (19:19).
10 And this [effective ministry in Ephesus] continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks...20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:10-20)
- D. *The apostolic prayers help us pray with a greater vision* for what God could do in the Church of our city, region and nation, not *only* our individual needs or congregations. (IE., Aunt Mildred’s cat)

IV. PRACTICALS

- A. *First, read the apostolic prayer.* It is common for the language in these prayers to feel awkward at the beginning as the words and phrases are not every day vocabulary. Over time, this feeling will change.
- B. *Isolate key phrases.* We may not know what to isolate and if we do isolate a few phrases, we may not be confident what they fully mean. Over time, as we pray these prayers, study these passages and dialogue with the Lord about them, our understanding will increase and we will feel more confident using them.
- C. *Elaborate what the phrases mean.* Take a few phrases develop their thoughts and why they matter.
- D. *Pray from your heart.* No one can pray from your heart but you. Only you can speak God’s words (Rom. 10:8, 17) and love God with your own voluntary love. This is a fragrant and necessary offering to the Lord.
 1. As a picture of NT prayers from a priestly people, God called the incense the priests burned before Him in the Tabernacle of Moses, “fragrant” (Ex. 30:8–9; 1 Chron. 23:13; 2 Chron. 29:11; Mal. 1:11)
 2. God takes our prayers in heaven and keeps them in bowls to be poured out (Rev. 5:8; 8:1–5)
 3. All heavenly activity comes from prayer (Lk. 18:7)

V. THE APOSTOLIC PRAYERS

A. Jesus

1. The Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9–13)
2. Prayer for anointed laborers in the Harvest (Matt 9:37–38; Luke 10:2)
3. Prayer for the release of the Holy Spirit's ministry (Luke 11:13)
4. Prayer for strength in temptation (Matt. 26:40–41)
5. The High Priestly Prayer (John 17:1–26)

B. Paul

1. Prayer for revelation of Jesus' beauty and the Bride's destiny unto transformation (Eph. 1:17–19)
2. Prayer for the release of supernatural strength in the heart unto experiencing God's emotions (Eph. 3:16–19)
3. Prayer for God's love to abound in our heart resulting in discernment and righteousness (Phil 1:9–11)
4. Prayer to know God's will, to be fruitful in ministry and strengthened by intimacy with God (Col. 1:9–12)
5. Prayer for unity in the church across a city or region (Rom. 15:5–7)
6. Prayer to be filled with supernatural joy, peace and hope (Rom. 15:13)
7. Prayer for Israel to be saved through Jesus (Rom. 10:1)
8. Prayer for the release of apostolic ministry and to abound in love and holiness (1 Thes. 3:9–13)
9. Prayer for the release of the Holy Spirit's power unto mature holiness (1 Thes. 5:23–24)
10. Prayer to be equipped and prepared to receive the fulness of God's destiny for the church (2 Thes. 1:11–12)
11. Prayer for the Word to increase by the release of God's power to win unbelievers to Jesus. (2 Thes. 3:1–5; cf. God beautifying his Word with signs and wonders: Acts 13:48; 19:20; 6:7; 12:24; 13:12)
12. Prayer that God would open a door of evangelism through releasing His power on the Word. (Col. 4:2–4; cf. God creating an open door for evangelism: Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Rev 3:8; 2Tim 2:24–26; Acts 16:14; Luke 24:45)
13. Prayer to enriched with the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit leading unto righteousness. (1 Cor. 1:4–8; cf. We must desire what we pray for: 1 Cor. 12:31; 1 Cor. 14:1, 39)
14. Prayer for the release of apostolic ministry and that we would abound in love and holiness (1 Cor. 3:9–13)
15. An apostolic intercessory benediction to be established with insight into the mystery. (Rom. 16:25–27)

C. Peter (Acts 4:24–31; 2 Peter 1:2, 3; 3:18)

D. John (Acts 4:24–31; Rev. 22:17, 20)

VI. PRAYING THE APOSTOLIC PRAYER

1. *Pick a target for your prayer:* what topic, situation or person / people group will you address with this prayer?

2. *Choose an apostolic prayer:* This could be one you will use privately or the prayer leader uses during the intercession set. Write out the Scripture and the reference below.

3. *Identify key phrases.* Circle a few key phrases in the verse above that you want to emphasize in your prayer.

4. *Elaborate key words / phrases.* Pick one of the phrases above and write what you think it means and why it is important to ask God in this situation.

5. *Now pray.* Read the Scripture, pray highlighting the key ideas or phrases you previously circled you target the specific situation on your heart. Try to go longer than you feel comfortable. Stretch your vocabulary and understanding while you give the Spirit time to highlight things as you pray. Repeat the process again!